

## **Media Statement**

**22 May 2008**

### **Workplace Skill Investment Critical**

“The announcement of focussed investment on developing the skills of the workforce outlined in today’s Budget will address a critical barrier to lifting workplace productivity,” said Jeremy Baker, Executive Director of the Industry Training Federation.

The Government has announced \$168 million dollars over the next four years to support the implementation of the NZ Skills Strategy, which is being developed by a partnership of business, union and industry groups, including the Industry Training Federation.

“The focus of today’s announcement is on a key priority in the NZ Skills Strategy – the literacy, language and numeracy capabilities of our workforce. Nearly 40% of our workforce do not have the level of these skills required to lift New Zealand’s productivity, profitability and pay rates,” said Mr Baker.

“New Zealand’s 40 Industry Training Organisations (ITOs) already work with 35,000 businesses and 180,000 people each year, with a strong focus on lifting productivity and performance. This additional focussed resource will assist ITOs and other organisations to better support workers and employers to address skill shortages and improve the performance of our industries,” added Mr Baker.

“ITOs look forward to working with our partners in the business community and government to ensure that this investment results in real and positive change,” Mr Baker concluded.

Ends.

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*For more information on the NZ Skills Strategy see*

*<http://www.skillsstrategy.govt.nz> or visit the Industry Training Federation website: <http://www.itf.org.nz>*